

HUNTINGTON'S QUEER MENTAL PROCESSES.

Says the Report of the Pacific Railroads Commission Is Idle Gossip.

This Strange Old Man's Logic Perplexes the Souls of the Morgan Committee.

A Faulty Memory and a Guileless Nature Denies Him the Happiness of Giving Details.

HAS NEVER SPECULATED, HE SAYS.

The Central Pacific Completed Quickly for Californians Who Were in a Hurry to Go Home "to See the Old Folks" in the East.

By Ambrose Bierce.

Washington, March 6.—Mr. Huntington's reappearance before the Senate Committee on Pacific Railroads to-day was marked by no remarkable incident except his surrender of the book that he had borrowed to refresh his memory. Senator Morgan was late, delayed apparently by the weight of the papers that he brought; but he had hardly settled in his chair when, without visible consciousness of the existence of man on this globe, he began in a low colloquial tone to interrogate the witness. Had he read the book (the report of the Pacific Railroads Commission of 1877), and what did he think of it? The witness did not think well of it, he objected to it in detail and in general to its facts and to the conclusions drawn from them. He repeated in another form his conviction that the commission had picked up its information at the street corners and in the cars.

One of the most remarkable mental phenomena manifested by the strange old man is his persistence in affirming the most obvious absurdities in the face of visible proof. He had just laid down a book which had been in his possession for two weeks, and before the country for eight years—a book containing hundreds of pages of sworn testimony, regularly taken, including that of himself, his associates and many of their subordinates—a book that is one of the most elaborate, important and famous public documents ever published by order of Congress. Yet he sat there in the presence of Senators, attorneys and members of the press, and calmly asserted on his oath that the book was false and made up in idle gossip. Truly there are phases of human thought and motive which transcend comprehension.

When reminded that the report contained his own testimony he seemed surprised and explained that he supposed the commissioners had given it no attention; anyhow, they had no means of information, and in point of fact knew nothing. From incidents like this, some conception may be had of the hopelessness of the task of dealing with this witness.

When told that it was natural that he should cherish a feeling of disesteem for men who had condemned him, Mr. Huntington protested his ability to divide a thing owned by himself and another into even halves; but he said nothing about his disposition to keep both halves.

Senator Morgan's questions to-day were frequently suggested by a written statement which Mr. Huntington submitted, but which was not read aloud. When asked about certain contracts which he and his associates as railroad directors had made with themselves as railroad constructors, the witness said his connection with the road had not been continuous, the contracts may have been made while he was out; but he was unable to say when he was out, or for how long—one year, one month, one week, or one day. An effort was made to learn what became of the Widow Cotton's interest after her good husband's death had been cut short by the scissors of the fairest of the fates, but the inquiry was barren of result, though the witness did dimly remember certain litigation about it. He testified, too, that he bought and lived in the Cotton house on Knob Hill, but indignantly denied that in so doing he got possession of any valuable private papers. Wall paper, he added with some humor, was what he found there. It would be interesting to know who prompted the question that led to the denial.

For nearly an hour Senator Morgan tried to learn all about the business affairs of the hardware and metal houses of Huntington & Hopkins, with a view to learning how much money Huntington had that was available for putting into the Central Pacific. The inquiry did not develop much, the witness could recollect little else than that he had implicitly trusted everything to others, and had no head for figures. Nevertheless, this guileless soul affirmed and reaffirmed his investment of a large, though indefinite sum. His faulty memory, which denied him the happiness of stating details, dates, figures, and the truth, did not at all hinder his negation of all those stated by the Commissioners in their report. If the Commissioners had said that it cost \$100,000 to build Noah's Ark, he would promptly have challenged the statement as obviously absurd; but if pressed to say himself within \$100,000 of how much it did cost, he could not have done so. By the way, if he has ever heard of the Flood, he no doubt considers it an unrighteous discrimination in favor of water transportation.

When asked to-day why the Central Pacific was pushed to completion some seven years sooner than it was by law required to be (entailing, of course, an enormous needless expense), Mr. Huntington at first explained that it was in deference to the great number of Californians who wanted to go home "to see the old folks" in the East. Here Senator Morgan peremptorily stopped him. He did not want any of that nonsense, of "poetry," as he called it once before. I mention it only as a singular illustration of Mr. Huntington's astonishing mental processes. On as many as half a dozen occasions during this investigation he has answered some question—always so relevantly as in this instance—with precisely the same words never varied, although in every instance, except the first, he has been contemptuously stopped. He has several other forms of sentiment that he brings in over and over again, always in the same words and with the same humiliating result. One of them, and next to the "old folks at home" yarn his favorite, is the story of the enormous difficulty and expense of building the railroad over the Sierra—which, by the way, General Traffic Manager Stubbs de-

scribed the other day as "a wall of rock 12,000 feet high." Mr. Huntington's pathetic tale of constructing a road across it is longer than his others and embraces the number of feet of lumber used in the snow sheds and the nine engines that he has seen pushing one snow plough. It is always introduced suddenly and unexpectedly, never having any relation whatever to anything that has gone before; and it varies no more than the others. Like them, it is always nipped in the bud by the frost of the Morganese disfavor; whereupon, as in the other instances, the narrator meekly confesses to having entertained the erroneous belief that the committee had wanted to hear about it. The thought suggested by these extraordinary mental vagaries, is one upon which one does not care to dwell.

Much of Senator Morgan's effort was directed to finding out why, during the five years that the stock of the road paid dividends, no provision was made for a sinking fund to pay the bonds. Mr. Huntington's first reply was that the objection to the plan was its "novelty," his second, that "such things never are done"—which is, perhaps, about the same answer. He later explained that just before the passage of the Thurman act, the directors had passed a resolution setting up a sinking fund. Unfortunately, they were too late; the Thurman act set up one itself, and the only effect of the resolution was the proud consciousness of having passed it.

The grand inquirer now began putting questions with a view to showing that some of Mr. Huntington's sales of dividend-paying Central Pacific stock at nineteen per cent of its face value were "wash" sales, intended to bear the market and disorganize the price of Union Pacific. This supplied the witness with a welcome opportunity to expound his greater virtues. It seems he has never done so evil a thing as speculate in stocks or anything else. As to working the market, he would die first—to the unspeakable disappointment of every hangman in the United States and Pennsylvania.

LOOKS BLUE FOR BLUECOAT.

Cabman Flanagan Presents a Strong Case Against Shattenkirk.

Patrolman Simon Shattenkirk, of the West Thirty-seventh Street Station, was on trial before Commissioner Grant at Police Headquarters yesterday on charges preferred by William Flanagan, a cab driver, of No. 521 West Twenty-seventh street. The latter says he was assaulted by Shattenkirk the morning of February 14, after driving the patrolman and a party of friends around town for several hours. Two women were in the party. Flanagan admitted that he was once arrested and convicted of burglary. That was no reason, however, he claimed, why he should be hounded by the police.

The accused patrolman denied the charge and made a statement. This cabman cross-examined Shattenkirk until the latter became nettled and made contradictory statements. The cabman's position was further supported by several members of the Swallow Club, who swore that the policeman was not at their ball at Lyric Hall, as he had testified.

MUSICAL UNIONS AT WAR

The Manhattan Wants to Monopolize the Orchestras of Theatres.

The Manhattan Musical Union is now making a strong effort to oust the members of the Musical Mutual Protective Union who may happen to be playing in the theatre orchestras.

It has secured the aid of the Central Labor Union, with which it is affiliated, and it has been decided to try the Fourteenth Street Theatre first. Manager Rosenquest, of that theatre, employs none but union musicians, and up to now he was unaware of a rivalry between the unions. The object is to make all musicians join the Manhattan Musical Union. Last Sunday the Central Labor Union was very unwilling to recognize this fight, as it would eventually mean a strike in every theatre in the city for a sentimental grievance. It is thought probable that rather than concur in a strike arising merely out of trades' union rivalry, the Central Labor Union will raise the boycott on the M. M. P. U.

Manager Rosenquest, of the theatre, said last night that the committee told him there would be no trouble.

THIEF CAME OVER THE ROOFS

Entered Dr. Sidney Wilcox's Residence and Stole Jewelry.

Dr. Sidney P. Wilcox's residence, No. 51 West Fifty-second street, was visited by sneak thieves last Tuesday for the second time within a year. Dr. Wilcox is visiting surgeon at Flower Hospital and was at that institution when the thefts were committed.

When Mrs. Wilcox went to the fourth floor about 4 o'clock she found that a thief had entered the house by way of the scuttle in the roof and rifled the bureau drawers of \$175 worth of jewelry. The thief carried away a diamond ring worth \$50, a lady's watch, a fraternity pin, a maltese cross, a silver chain, a gold ring, two gold bracelets, an alligator hand bag and a gold silk skirt. The thief, it is thought, used the bag to carry away the articles. The thief crossed from a neighboring roof and left no trace behind by which he might be identified.

THEY START FOR PALM BEACH.

Cornelius Vanderbilt and Party on Their Way to a Warmer Climate.

Cornelius Vanderbilt and party left over the Pennsylvania Railroad at 10:25 yesterday morning for Palm Beach, Fla. The party occupied five cars. There were a number of friends to see them off, including Chauncey M. Depew. He afterward returned to New York.

TOO MANY FADS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The Present Course of Study Is Attacked by the Women Principals.

They Have Not Time Enough to Hear the Lessons in All the Prescribed Studies.

COMPLAIN TO BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Superintendent Jasper Indorses All Their Statements and Declares He Is in Favor of Immediate Reform.

The ancient but popular fallacy that public school teachers and principals never unite in a really energetic concerted movement, except when an increase in pay or the lengthening of vacation are the objects in view, has been disproved by the effort of the women principals of this city to have the yearly course of study now in use in New York revised and made more practical in size and in substance.

The "school marm's" are thoroughly aroused and mean to win their fight against the old course, no matter what the trouble or cost. The feeling has been growing for years among the principals of New York public schools that some relief should be provided for the teachers and pupils who find it absolutely impossible to cover the present course in the time allotted.

STUDY OF TEMPERANCES. The new law compelling the teaching of temperance physiology for 100 minutes a week was the final straw. When it went into effect January 21 the teachers found that they had about 500 minutes a week laid out for them which they could in no way crowd in.

At a meeting of the women principals of grammar department schools February 9 the advisability of a petition to the Board of Education to change the course was discussed and brought about a meeting of these women and the women principals of the primary schools. At this joint meeting, February 20, at the Normal College, the following petition to the Board of Education was offered by Miss Julia Richman, principal of the female department of Public School No. 77, and signed by all present:

As a joint meeting of the Association of Female Principals of Grammar Departments, and the Association of Principals of Primary Departments and Schools, held Thursday, February 20, it was unanimously resolved to lay the following facts before your honorable body:

That the requirements of each grade, as prescribed by the present course of study (both regular and manual training), cannot be intelligently or thoroughly met in the allotted time.

That too much written work is required in all the grades.

That under the burden of attempting the impossible, positive injury is done to both pupils and teachers.

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2 CENT STAMPS ACCEPTED.

In view of the foregoing facts, we respectfully ask such a modification of the present course of studies as shall enable us intelligently and thoroughly to meet the requirements of law.

This was forwarded to the Board at the meeting last Wednesday, and Commissioner Hubbell spoke in its behalf. The petition was referred to the Committee on Instruction, of which John L. N. Hunt is chairman. The other members of the committee are Commissioners Andrews, Holt, Hurlbut and Beneville.

SUPERINTENDENT JASPER'S STATEMENT. City Superintendent of Schools John Jasper was seen at his home in Harlem yesterday. He said of the petition:

"I am thoroughly in sympathy with the principals' cause. Not long ago, at a meeting of the two associations, I requested them to inquire into the present course of study very carefully and report upon it to the Board of Education. This they have done and their action meets with my full approval and will receive my heartiest cooperation. Undoubtedly the change they desire will eventually be made. We have had this course of study for six years, and I admit it is not properly divided. The pupils and teachers are asked to do more than any ordinary human being could possibly be expected to accomplish. We must certainly have a big change very soon."

Miss Richman was seen at her home, No. 7 West Eighty-eighth street. She said: "The course we now have started with the three R's twenty-five years ago, and every new fad or hobby has been added as it came along. The classes, too, have grown larger with the growth of the city. Now every grade has more work mapped out for it than the teacher can possibly complete. Consequently at each promotion children are sent ahead insufficiently pre-

pared to work in the higher studies. These deficiencies accumulate until in the higher classes the work to be done to prepare the pupils for college is simply enormous. There is too much written work and too much drawing. There is so little time that it would be impossible to ask the children the questions verbally. So they are required to write. This, of course, is all wrong.

TOO MUCH ARITHMETIC.

"There is too much arithmetic and too much business. Why, we teach matter that would make business men laugh and require problems that cannot be found outside of an arithmetic. Geography and history are so subdivided that it is impossible to get acceptable results. The actual work takes so long that there is no time for review and no time at all to help the backward children. They have to fall by the wayside."

"There is a compulsory one hundred minutes a week laid out for the study of the German language in my school, and we have not one hundred minutes left to teach the English language. We are also compelled to give ten minutes' instruction every day in musical notation and ten minutes in calligraphy. Four days in the week we must take twenty-five precious minutes for this temperance physiology. Then there are the ten minutes a day for teaching penmanship. Besides that, there is no allowance for the many interruptions which take up so much of a teacher's time. Visitors, new scholars, securing facts for special reports, giving out and collecting supplies, sick pupils, refractory pupils and so on make many interruptions."

"We have not time for innovations, no time for individuality in instruction, no time for anything but the routine work, and not much more than half enough time for that if we teach it properly."

EIGHT-HOUR ULTIMATUM.

Horsehoes and Carpenters Selected to Present and Enforce the Demand This Year.

In conformity with its plan of advancing the eight-hour movement by selecting one or more trades to make the demand on May 1 of every year, the American Federation of Labor has designated the horsehoes and carpenters to insist on the eight-hour limit in their respective trades this year. In the next issue of the Federationist will be printed an address by President Gompers, who contends that labor-saving machinery has so altered economic conditions that the eight-hour limit must be enforced if willing workers are not to be condemned to idleness and starvation.

"Of course," says Mr. Gompers, "we cannot say what degree of success will attend the general movement this year, as the result of the decision arrived at, but we are confident that efforts will be made by our fellow workers in many localities. The only question now is whether some of our national or international unions, which have passed through so critical a test as that of the recent industrial crisis, will be in a position to make a demand all along the line."

"We shall soon ascertain the spirit prevailing in the organizations to make this effort, and their readiness to lead in the movement; their willingness to be selected by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to make the demand, and if necessary stand for its enforcement."

It is understood that several unions are yet undecided whether they will make the eight-hour demand or not. Among the trades which have decided very lately to make it are several of those embraced in the United Garment Workers.

DID NOT MAKE CHARGES.

President La Grange Denies That He Accused Fire Department Men of Blackmail.

President La Grange, of the Board of Fire Commissioners, yesterday said that he had never claimed that blackmail had been resorted to by officials of the department in their discretionary enforcement of the law compelling factories, theatres and other places where large numbers of people congregate or work, to have telegraphic connection with the Fire Department.

Mr. La Grange said: "What I did say, and now repeat, is that the law giving discretionary powers to the Board of Fire Commissioners for political and financial blackmail of any statute I have ever seen. What I mean by financial blackmail is the acceptance of money for letting persons disregard the law."

President La Grange said there would probably be no further investigation of the actions of subordinates, as there was no indication on the part of the present members of the Board to blame those men for not enforcing laws that the old Board did not direct them to enforce.

The Board will take some definite action on the obnoxious statute giving the "discretionary powers" next Wednesday.

Comptroller Palmer Must Pay. Robert Crumney, a Democrat and a veteran, whom Comptroller Palmer, of Brooklyn, removed a year ago, but who was afterward reinstated by order of the Supreme Court, secured judgment for \$1,570, the amount he lost in salary. Yesterday Judge Clement decided that Mr. Palmer must pay the money out of his own pocket.

Albert Peiser Wins His Test Case. The Grand Jury yesterday dismissed the case against Albert Peiser, of No. 1338 Third avenue, president of the Delicatessen Storekeepers' Association, who was arrested for selling cooked food on Sunday. Peiser made a test case of the matter and was arrested by order of Chief of Police Conlin.

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